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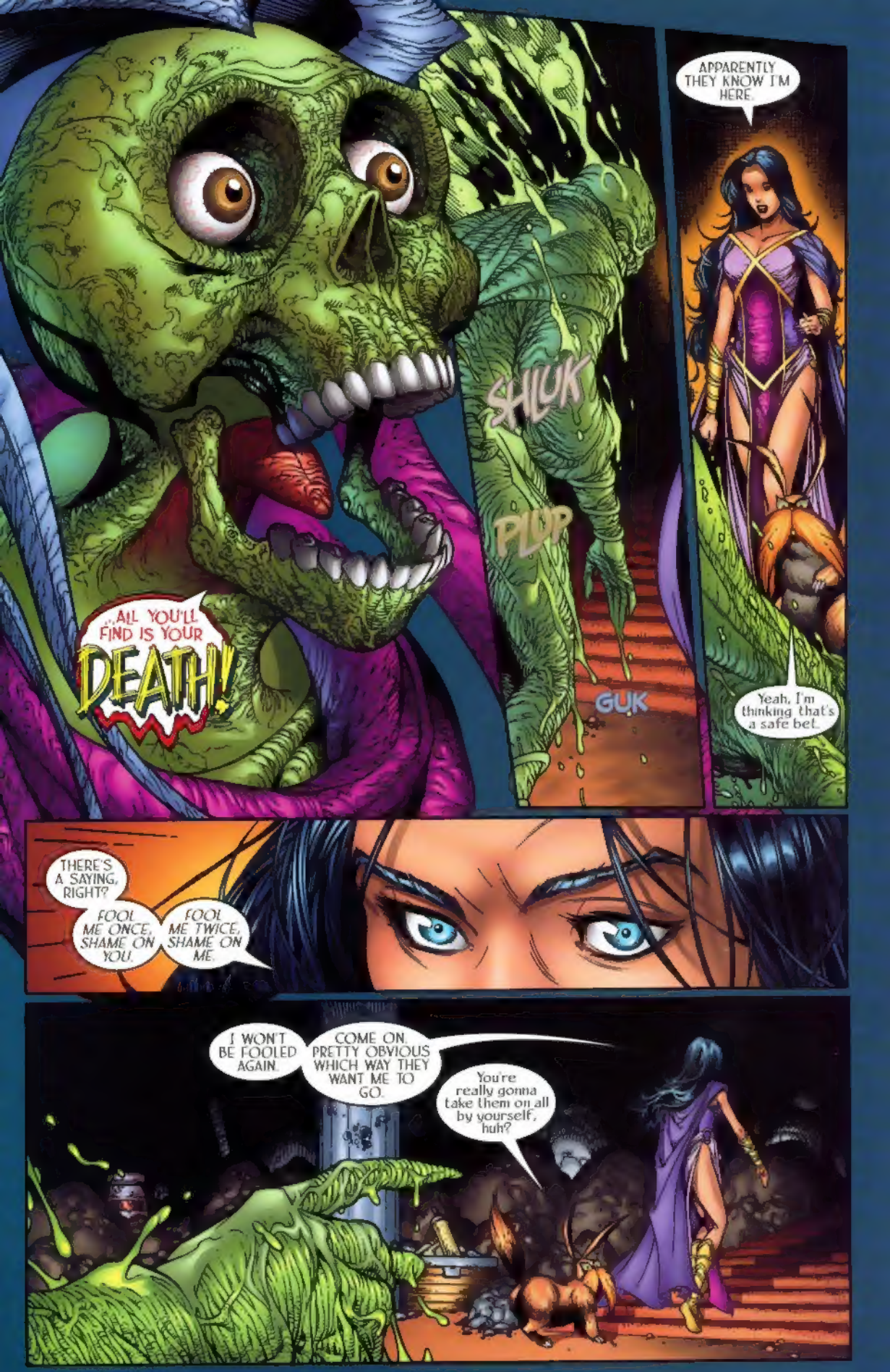
#6

MMMFFH
FEEF?
EEPS!

LOOKS LIKE THE RIGHT PLACE.
Well, that depends.
If the hidden sanctum of the six most powerful sorcerers on the planet, all of whom want you DEAD, is your idea of "the right place"...
...then, yeah, we're here.
SHUT UP, SKITTER.
You know, I don't remember actually agreeing to that name. How bout something a little more virile?
Like Rex.
Or Dirk.
I LIKE Dirk.
SHUT UP, SKITTER.

THIS CAN'T BE *THAT* EASY, CAN IT?
THE GUILD MASTERS AREN'T EVEN HERE...
...AND THERE'S MY SISTER.
Is it me, or does this seem just a *LITTLE* convenient?
YOU ALWAYS THINK THE WORST.
It always *IS* the worst.
GENEVIEVE? YOU OKAY?
WHERE ARE THE...
...MASTERS...

NOT THE FACE YOU WERE EXPECTING, GISELLE? DID YOU REALLY BELIEVE YOU HAD THE SLIGHTEST NOTION OF WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU...
...OF THE WORLD YOU'VE ENTERED? YOU'RE NOTHING MORE THAN A *THIEF* WHO'S SNATCHED POWER FROM ITS OWNERS...
...AND YOU HAVE NO TRUE CONCEPTION OF HOW TO USE WHAT YOU'VE STOLEN. YOU'VE BEEN *PLAYING* AT MAGIC...
...BUT THIS IS DEADLY BUSINESS. YOU FACE *US* NOW, NOT OUR SERVANTS...
...AND THIS TIME WE ARE *PREPARED* FOR YOU, GISELLE. WE KNOW *GESTURES* TO REND YOUR FLESH AND SNAP YOUR BONES LIKE KINDLING...
...*WORDS* TO RIP THE SOUL FROM YOUR BODY. YOU'VE COME HERE FOR YOUR SISTER...


...ALL YOU'LL FIND IS YOUR DEATH!
SHLUK
PLOP
GUK
APPARENTLY THEY KNOW I'M HERE.
Yeah, I'm thinking that's a safe bet.
THERE'S A SAYING, RIGHT?
FOOL ME ONCE, SHAME ON YOU.
FOOL ME TWICE, SHAME ON ME.
I WON'T BE FOOLED AGAIN.
COME ON. PRETTY OBVIOUS WHICH WAY THEY WANT ME TO GO.
You're really gonna take them on all by yourself, huh?

ALONE EXCEPT FOR THE SEVEN SPIRITS I'M APPARENTLY STUCK WITH.
WHAT EXACTLY IS THIS PLACE?
A PLACE BETWEEN PLACES, GISELLE. A PLACE OF PURE MAGIC.
THE SANCTUM OF MASTERS IS MORE THAN A PHYSICAL REALM. THE CATACOMB YOU JUST DEPARTED IS MERELY ONE ASPECT.
GO EASY WITH THE METAPHYSICAL STUFF. I'M STILL PRETTY NEW AT THIS.
THERE IS MUCH FOR YOU TO LEARN, GISELLE. BUT THERE'S TIME ENOUGH FOR YOU TO MASTER ALL OF IT.
WE WON'T BE TRAPPED IN THIS VESSEL LONG ENOUGH FOR HER TO MASTER ANYTHING, NOUVEAU.
LACK OF VISION IS WHAT I EXPECT OF YOUR MYOPIC GUILD, MAGUS. AS ALWAYS.
WHY DO YOU REFUSE TO SEE THE OPPORTUNITY SHE REPRESENTS? IN HER, ALL OF OUR STRENGTH IS COMBINED.
I WAS YOUR ALLY BY NECESSITY AGAINST THE THREAT WE FACED, ALAIN. I'D NEVER DO SO BY CHOICE, THEN OR NOW.
PLAY NICE, BOYS.
I THINK WE'VE ESTABLISHED YOU'RE STUCK WITH ME. AT LEAST 'TIL DEATH DO US PART.

I JUST WISH THIS WAS OVER WITH.
SO ANYBODY WANT TO TELL ME WHERE THIS EVENTUALLY...
THE NOUVEAU FOOL GIVES HIS AID WILLINGLY...
...BUT DON'T EXPECT THE REST OF US TO COOPERATE WITH YOU AGAINST OUR OWN GUILD MASTERS.
WELL, I DON'T REALLY NEED YOUR COOPERATION, DO I?
I CAN ACCESS YOUR POWER WHETHER ANY OF YOU WANTS ME TO OR NOT.

...LEADS...
IT CAN'T BE...
...I'M ON THE THIRD MOON!

I ASSURE YOU...
...BEING ON THE MOON IS THE LEAST OF YOUR CONCERNS.
WE'VE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH THIS ONCE. I'M NOT INTIMIDATED BY THE SIX OF YOU.
THAT'S MY REAL SISTER THIS TIME, NOT JUST A DUPLICATE? THERE'S NOT MUCH LEFT OF THE ONE YOU SENT AFTER ME.
I DON'T WANT A FIGHT. WHAT I WANT IS TO BE LEFT ALONE.
SO JUST GIVE ME MY SISTER.
GIVE US OUR SPIRITS.
YOU KNOW I CAN'T.

Okay, here's the plan. You go take care of them
I'll go get your sister
YOU'RE
WAIT. YOU'RE GOING TO WHAT?
YOU?
PITY.

GREAT I'M TAKING ORDERS FROM A SCOUT NOW
LOOK AFTER YOURSELF FIRST GISELLE. THEN YOU CAN WORRY ABOUT YOUR SISTER'S PREDICAMENT
WHUH?!
YOU SLIPPED AWAY FROM US BEFORE WOMAN
NOT THIS TIME
BELIEVE ME
SHE'S NOT ATYAMI'S EQUAL, NO MATTER WHAT POWER SHE WIELDS

UHF!
WHAT
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE GROUND?
I'M NOT RUNNING AWAY
CARE TO ADJUST YOUR OPINION JINAI?
BE STILL, ALAIN HALTEUR DOESN'T BECOME YOU
AND THIS IS FAR FROM FINISHED
AAAH!
SAND SEDUCERS

FAVORED TOOLS OF THE TANTRICS
SMOTHERED IN SAND OR SPLIT IN HALF, huh?
NEITHER THANKS
KOOOSH
UNTHINKABLE
IMPOSSIBLE!
OKAY SO TWO DOWN, BUT WHERE ARE

THE REST
DESPITE WHAT YOU BELIEVE ALAIN, SHE'LL NEVER SURVIVE ALL OF THEM
WAIT
THEY TREAT ME LIKE A FOOL YOU KNOW
FHOOM
MONDRU?

TELLING ME TO STAND GUARD WHILE THEY ACT. DIDN'T I ARM MYSELF WITH THE BOOTS OF BARTA AND GAUNTLETS OF GAMM? THEY'VE NEVER RESPECTED
A HA!
OOP
TRYING TO SNEAK UP ON ME?
YOU'RE THE THIEF'S PET, AREN'T YOU?
WHY WOULD ANYONE PICK SOMETHING AS MANGY AS A SQUIT FOR THEIR FAMILIAR?
EEEE!
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THAT IS
BUT THE TIMING WAS RIGHT
NOW WHERE DID THAT BURST

CLOP
OWF!
YOU'VE DONE WELL.
BETTER EVEN THAN WE EXPECTED. WE WERE PRUDENT TO ARM OURSELVES WITH ARTIFACTS OF POWER
BUT YOUR RESISTANCE IS OVER
THE SEVEN GUILDS HAVE RULED CIRESS FOR CENTURIES. WE'RE NOT ABOUT TO HAVE THAT ENDED BY A SOCIALITE TRAMP
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS BLADE DOES, GISELLE? NO, IN YOUR IGNORANCE OF COURSE YOU DON'T
IN ADDITION TO OPENING YOUR THROAT, IT RIPS THE SOUL FROM YOU AND *BANISHES* IT TO REALMS OF UNSPEAKABLE TORMENT
AND WHAT WAS OURS WILL BE *OURS* AGAIN
GISELLE? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I WANT YOU TO SUFFER
MAGUS.

THE OTHER ONE'S FREE
HOW COULD--
AH?!
SHE'S PRETTY RESILIENT
RUNS IN THE FAMILY
I'LL HAVE YOUR SKULL FOR A GOBLET YOU ACCURSED--
SHRAK
BOOM
TELL ME, GISELLE--

WHAT'S YOUR SISTER'S LIFE WORTH TO YOU?
IS IT WORTH *YOUR* LIFE?
YOURS FOR HERS. SURRENDER YOURSELF AND SHE LIVES. DEFY ME
AND I'LL *SACRIFICE* HER HERE AND NOW
WHEN I GOT DRAGGED INTO ALL THIS I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT MAGIC
BUT I'M *LEARNING*
YOU DECEIVED ME
THANKS FOR THE *LESSON!*
WHAK
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN MAKE DOUBLES
HEY, SIS

...YOU CAME BACK FOR ME. THANKS.
WELL, WHAT'D YOU *THINK* I WAS GOING TO DO?
TRUTHFULLY, IT WASN'T ME THAT... I MEAN, HOW DID YOU GET FREE? I SAW THIS BRIGHT FLASH, BUT...
SOMETHING SENT MONDRU FLYING LIKE A CORK OUT OF A CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE, I'M JUST NOT SURE *WHAT*.
THE SHACKLES MELTED AWAY WHEN THE LAST OF THE MASTERS FELL, BY THE WAY...
...*MUCH* BETTER OUTFIT.
YEAH, I THINK SO TOO.
SO... WHAT NOW?
THE MASTERS LIE AT YOUR FEET, GISELLE.
YOU'VE PROVEN YOU'RE MORE THAN THEY ARE... EVEN TO THE OTHER SPIRITS.
YOU DIDN'T CHOOSE THIS POWER. IT CHOSE **YOU**. NOW YOU CAN CHOOSE TO EMBRACE IT.
THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN MASTERS, GISELLE...

...THERE'S NEVER BEEN A TRUE MYSTIC.
I DON'T KNOW.
I DON'T KNOW IF I'M REALLY READY FOR THIS.
THEN I'LL HELP YOU...
...WITH EVERYTHING. YOU CAN DEPEND ON ME, GISELLE.
IF THIS POWER'S GOING TO BE YOURS, LET'S MAKE SURE YOU USE IT, RATHER THAN THE OTHER WAY AROUND.
I DON'T THINK THERE'S A BETTER PLACE TO START THAN SENDING THE MASTERS BACK TO THEIR CATHEDRALS. YOU'VE GOT THEIR SPIRITS...

...YOU MIGHT AS WELL MAKE THEIR SANCTUM YOURS, TOO.

GISELLE?
IT'S OKAY, ELLE...
...IT'S OVER.